

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-6 and 23-27 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,812,528 to Van Dervort.

Applicants have in response canceled claims 1-6 and 23-27 without prejudice or disclaimer, thereby rendering the Examiner's rejection moot.

Claims 7 and 8 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious in view of Van Dervort and Takahashi.

Applicants have in response canceled claims 7 and 8 without prejudice or disclaimer, thereby rendering the Examiner's rejection moot.

Applicants note with appreciation the allowance of claims 12-22.

However, Applicants also note discrepancies in the Office Action regarding the status of certain pending claims. Specifically, the Examiner indicated that claims 9-11 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants note that both the PTOL-326 form and numbered section 5 of the Detailed Action indicate that only claims 7 and 8 were rejected in view of the combination of Van Dervort and Takahashi. However, the Examiner nonetheless commented on why claims 9-11 were obvious in view of the combination of Van Dervort and Takahashi in numbered section 5.

Upon noting the above discrepancy in the status of claims 9-11, the undersigned contacted the Examiner by telephone and requested that the Examiner clarify the status of these claims. The Examiner indicated that claims 9-11 were in fact rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious in view of Van Dervort and Takahashi, and that the

indication of allowability of these claims in numbered section 5 of the Office Action was incorrect.

In response, Applicants have canceled claims 9-11 without prejudice or disclaimer. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner verify for the record that the above characterization of the status of claims 9-11 is correct.

Further, the Examiner indicated on the PTOL-326 form that claims 28-32 were also allowed, and noted in numbered section 8 of the Detailed Action why claim 28 is allowed. Applicants note with appreciation the allowance of independent claim 28.

Regarding claims 29-32, these claims ultimately depend from claim 23, which was rejected as being anticipated by Van Dervort. Therefore, claims 29-32 cannot be allowed, but can at most only be objected to as containing allowable subject matter. As the status of these claims remains unclear, Applicants request that the Examiner contact the undersigned to discuss these claims and to clarify the status of these claims.

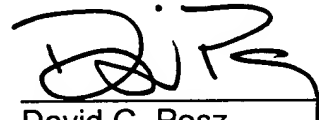
The Examiner should note that 10 sheets of formal drawings are also being submitted herewith along with a document entitled SUBMISSION OF FORMAL DRAWINGS. Written approval of these drawings and entry of these drawings into the record is respectfully requested.

Serial No. 09/408,808
Amendment responsive to Office Action dated June 21, 2004

In view of the above amendments and remarks, the present application is now believed to be in condition for allowance. A prompt notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

Please charge any unforeseen fees to Deposit Account No. 50-1147.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Posz', is written over a horizontal line.

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